

average of once every 10 years—it sends huge flows, hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of water per second, out of the Mississippi River into the Bonnet Carre Spillway and into Lake Pontchartrain, and it shifts from a salt or a brackish lake into a freshwater lake because of this huge surge.

As a result of the floodwaters coming from Canada and all over the United States, they come and impact the ecosystem of this lake.

So, what this legislation does is builds upon some of the efforts for ecological restoration.

I want to thank the great work of Carlton Dufrechou, Kristi Trail, and others who have done an amazing job in working to restore the ecological function of Lake Pontchartrain.

I again want to thank all the cosponsors and folks who have helped us to work on this legislation. It did pass unanimously last Congress, and I want to remind everybody here that there is a huge Federal nexus with this legislation. I urge its adoption.

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, H.R. 1921 would reauthorize an important program that supports the critical efforts of the Federal, State, and local watershed partners in restoring water quality in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1921.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

PREVENTING DISASTER REVICITIMIZATION ACT

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 539) to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to waive certain debts owed to the United States related to covered assistance provided to an individual or household, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 539

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Preventing Disaster Revictimization Act”.

SEC. 2. FLEXIBILITY.

Section 1216(a) of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (42 U.S.C. 5174a(a)) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (2)(A) to read as follows:

“(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), shall—

“(i) waive a debt owed to the United States related to covered assistance provided to an individual or household if the covered assistance was distributed based on an error by the Agency and such debt shall be construed as a hardship; and

“(ii) waive a debt owed to the United States related to covered assistance provided to an individual or household if such assistance is subject to a claim or legal action, including in accordance with section 317 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5160); and”;

and

(2) in paragraph (3)(B)—

(A) by striking “REMOVAL OF” and inserting “REPORT ON”; and

(B) in clause (ii) by striking “the authority of the Administrator to waive debt under paragraph (2) shall no longer be effective” and inserting “the Administrator shall report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate actions that the Administrator will take to reduce the error rate”.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report containing a description of the internal processes used to make decisions regarding the distribution of covered assistance under section 1216 of the Disaster Recovery and Reform Act of 2018 (42 U.S.C. 5174a) and any changes made to such processes.

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 539.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 539, the Preventing Disaster Re-

victimization Act, introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member GRAVES from Missouri and Representatives CARBAJAL, GARAMENDI, HUFFMAN, THOMPSON, and LAMALFA of California.

This legislation is designed to ensure disaster survivors are not revictimized by recoupment—or clawbacks—of Federal disaster assistance they have received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Unfortunately, FEMA has repeatedly instructed disaster survivors to register for individual assistance for which they were ultimately not eligible, or granted qualified survivors more assistance than they should have received.

However, once FEMA identifies an error, it forces these survivors into a bureaucratic nightmare to appeal the debt that they now owe as a result of the agency’s error. I am not surprised that this still goes on, but I am disappointed that—given the technology and data we have at our fingertips—we have not been able to improve this system for survivors, especially considering that this program is just a small piece of the Federal disaster recovery apparatus.

H.R. 539 would waive survivors’ debt owed to the Federal Government in instances where FEMA erroneously distributed assistance. This bill would also provide a similar waiver to disaster survivors who may be involved in a legal action against a party deemed responsible for a disaster event. While this scenario is less common, it played out in California last year and jeopardized disaster relief for tens of thousands of families displaced by the unprecedented wildfires of the last few years.

Survivors have already been traumatized by a disaster—the Federal Government should not force them to endure a convoluted process to correct FEMA’s mistakes or decision to pursue legal action years after an event against a liable party.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am a proud sponsor of this bill, the Preventing Disaster Revictimization Act.

In 2018, Congress made the recovery process fairer and more equitable for communities when we passed important reforms to the disaster preparation and recovery processes. This bill builds upon those efforts by ensuring that funds spent by disaster victims aren’t clawed back by the government.

When victims apply—and this is in good faith, mind you—when victims apply for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and receive it from the agency, those individuals likely need to move quickly to use that assistance for eligible expenses like home repairs to speed up

recovery and to begin rebuilding their lives, for obvious reasons. So, these victims should never expect that FEMA is going to come back weeks, months, and sometimes even years later and say: Oops, we made a mistake. Now you, the victim, are going to have to give back those funds that you have already put to good use.

To add insult to injury, FEMA's information on how disaster victims can appeal these decisions is incredibly confusing, and it is absolutely insufficient.

Remember, this is due to no fault of their own, but many disaster victims are faced with debt collectors and the full force of the Federal Government when it comes to repaying these funds.

This is absolutely unacceptable. People acting in good faith to rebuild should not be revictimized after they have properly relied upon FEMA's determination that they were qualified for the assistance that they did receive.

This bill, H.R. 539, is going to clarify that if FEMA makes an error, and there is no evidence of fraud, then the victim will not be revictimized. Their debt is automatically viewed as a hardship, and it is waived.

In addition, the bill would also require FEMA to report back to Congress, to us, on its error rates and tell us what they are doing to be more accurate.

Last Congress, this bill passed on the House floor and had bipartisan support. This Congress, the bill now has a companion version in the Senate, and I hope that we can see this legislation enacted into law this year and truly help disaster victims not only in my district but also across the Nation.

Madam Speaker, I encourage support for this bill. It is a good bill, and people don't need to be revictimized.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 539.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1330

EXPEDITED DELIVERY OF AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 468) to amend title 49, United States Code, to permit the use of incentive payments to expedite certain fed-

erally financed airport development projects.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 468

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. ALLOWABLE COST STANDARDS FOR AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 47110(b)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "(1) if the cost necessarily" and inserting "(1)(A) if the cost necessarily";

(2) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting "; or"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(B) if the cost is an incentive payment incurred in carrying out the project described in subparagraph (A) that is to be provided to a contractor upon early completion of a project, if—

"(i) such payment does not exceed the lesser of 5 percent of the initial construction contract amount or \$1,000,000;

"(ii) the level of contractor's control of, or access to, the worksite necessary to shorten the duration of the project does not negatively impact the operation of the airport;

"(iii) the contract specifies application of the incentive structure in the event of unforeseeable, non-weather delays beyond the control of the contractor;

"(iv) nothing in any agreement with the contractor prevents the airport operator from retaining responsibility for the safety, efficiency, and capacity of the airport during the execution of the grant agreement; and

"(v) the Secretary determines that the use of an incentive payment is likely to increase airport capacity or efficiency or result in cost savings as a result of shortening the project's duration;"

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 47110(e)(7) of title 49, United States Code, is amended in the heading by striking "PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AIRPORTS" and inserting "PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AIRPORTS".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 468.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 468, the Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021. Introduced by the committee's ranking member, SAM GRAVES, the bill incentivizes the early completion of airport projects funded by the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program.

As the global pandemic begins to subside and the number of vaccinated

Americans has steadily grown, the number of passengers traveling by air has dramatically increased. In fact, last month, the Transportation Security Administration recorded the highest number of daily passengers screened at U.S. airports since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing airports to find ways to keep up with the growing passenger demand.

This legislation will help address this need by allowing airports to use their Airport Improvement Program funding to offer incentive payments to contractors for early completion of airport development projects.

Importantly, H.R. 468 includes conditions that ensure projects completed early do not have a negative impact on airport safety, efficiency, or capacity.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 468, which is the Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021, and I want to thank Aviation Subcommittee Ranking Member GARRET GRAVES for cosponsoring the bill.

H.R. 468 provides airports with some commonsense tools to incentivize the early completion of airport projects using AIP funds, or Airport Improvement Program funds.

Under this bill, the use of AIP funds for incentive payments is left to the discretion of the airport operator, but the benefits of incentive payments are already well-known in the surface transportation sector.

This bill is going to allow airports to expedite the delivery of airport projects, take better advantage of short construction seasons, relieve operational disruptions that result from such projects and, obviously, save the taxpayer money.

This is a commonsense practice that is utilized in so many other Federal infrastructure projects and it does not increase Federal spending.

H.R. 468 is supported by the American Association of Airport Executives, the Airports Council International, and the Associated General Contractors of America.

This bill was introduced in Congress last year. It passed the House under suspension of the rules, and it was done by voice vote. I am hopeful that we can get this commonsense bill across the finish line this Congress. I would very much urge support of the legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), the ranking member of the Aviation Subcommittee.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman